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IN A SPASM OF REFORM.

THE COMMON COUNCIL PUTS OUT AN ELECTION "DODGER."

Ald. W. A. Chesley Comes to the Front as a Reformer and Kelly Passes as a Purist—Salaries Reduced in the Case of Clerks, But Maintained With Officials.

The common council has had a spasm of retrenchment and reform, by which it is calculated the taxes will be reduced from \$1.50 on the \$1,000 to \$1.42 this year.

Next year the rate is very likely to jump to \$1.60.

So much noise has been made about extravagance and taxation lately that some of the members who would be about the last to be suspected of any desire for reform have felt it necessary to make a cheap bid for popularity by jumping at a lot of reductions in the hope that the public would credit them with sincerity. They have been frightened into the idea that they ought to do something, and with their usual aptitude for blundering have made what is usually known as a mess of it.

In his inaugural address, a year ago, the mayor recommended a number of things for the consideration of the council, with a view to economy, and his address, together with a motion of Ald. McCarthy in regard to redistricting the city, was referred to a committee of six. Among other things to be considered was the reduction of the council. The committee met once, did nothing and was never called again. For nearly twelve long months the aldermen have gone their gait without any apparent thought of reform. The safety department, with W. A. Chesley as chairman, has gone in debt, while even Ald. Kelly who now poses as a purist and economist has not kept the public works department within bounds. Neither these nor any other aldermen, with one or two exceptions, have seemed to think that the time to consider economy was all the time, instead of by fits and starts. The North End has grabbed as greedily as ever for what it called its rights, and if it did not succeed in getting all it wanted at the expense of the taxpayers at large, it was not the fault of men who were willing to build up their own pocket boroughs whether the work was needed or not.

Suddenly an alarm was sounded, and the people were found to be talking of the necessity of sending the unfaithful stewards packing about their own business. This apparently alarmed some of the men who had neither no record for economy, or did have a record for extravagance and mismanagement in the past. They concluded that something ought to be done, and done in a hurry on the eve of an election. To their wise minds a number of expedients appear to have been suggested. When a speaker at one of the public meetings lately was cornered with the question of what he would do to reduce the expenditure, he answered at random, that he would reduce the police force. This seemed such a bright idea that the board of safety adopted it and recommended a reduction of ten men. The police are safe victims for economists. They are not specially popular with the masses, they have no votes at civic elections, and those likely to be displaced are either from the country or without influential friends in the city. So the reduction was made, with six dissenting voices. Somebody also suggested that the fire department be reduced and a saving of the vast sum of \$50 be made by dispensing with one district engineer. The board recommended this also, but between the meeting of the committee and the reception of the report by the council somebody seems to have told them they had made a mistake. When the section was read, both Chesley and O'Brien spoke against it, the latter admitting that he had agreed to it in committee, without knowing much about the effect of it. It was defeated almost without question, and so was a most extraordinary amendment moved by Ald. Kelly, seconded by Ald. Davis, and voted for by Ald. Davis alone, the motion of Ald. Kelly, if it uttered one, not being audible. It was that No. 1 engine house be shut up, thus decreasing the efficiency of a fire department, which in its full strength today, is probably less than sufficient to deal with emergencies which may occur at any moment. Ald. Kelly also expressed a wish to do away with the director of safety and chief engineer, leaving the discipline of the department in the hands of several district engineers.

It has long been admitted that some check should be put on street expenditure, but the council howled down a motion to this effect at the previous session. On Thursday, however, they made a wholesale reduction of more than \$14,000 in the director's estimates, leaving the amount \$26,000. If this limit is adhered to, it is tolerably certain there will be such a deterioration of the street service that a greatly increased assessment for absolutely necessary repairs will be inevitable in the very near future.

The director asked for \$7,000 for scavenger work. A portion of this sum has already been required for winter labor, but

the council thought \$5,000 enough and so ordered it. This is in the face of the fact that most of the well governed cities on this continent are taking extra precautions in cleanliness in view of the possibility of the cholera, when dirt means death. The men employed in scavenger work are of the poor class, some of whom are given the labor in order that they may get enough to eat without being supported in the almshouse. But many of them, too, have neither votes nor influence.

At the previous session of the council, a man named McInernay, who had been needlessly employed by the city as a private detective for the lessee of the market, to see that no countryman sold a dozen of eggs or a peck of potatoes on the streets, was dismissed, not only because he was a useless public charge, but because he had flatly refused to make himself useful around the market in other ways. This seems to have excited the ire of some of the North End men, as they were particularly fierce in clamoring for the reduction or abolition of salaries on Thursday. The matter came up on an omnibus motion of Ald. Chesley, suddenly sprung and dealt with as suddenly by the council.

As recorded on the paper a saving of about \$5,300 was to be effected in salaries, which would mean a little over two cents on the hundred dollars in the assessment. It included the abolition of the office of mayor's clerk with its paltry salary of \$400, by which process a man who is assessed on \$600 would be able to save one cent per annum. The littleness of jumping on this useful and unoffending official was recognized by the board, however, and this item was not touched.

There was another item to abolish the office of the clerk of the public works. If there has been a man in the city employ who has fully earned his salary it has been Mr. Seely, and everybody outside of the professed economists of the council, who knows anything of the duties he performs, is aware of this fact. The office was not abolished, despite the efforts of Chesley, Kelly and some other followers of their newly unfurled standard of reform, but the salary of a thoroughly competent and faithful official was reduced to \$750, a clear and unjust cut of twenty-five per cent.

The salary of the chamberlain was not touched and very properly. Neither was that of the first clerk, Mr. Willett. Mr. Harding escaped with a cut of \$100 instead of \$200 as proposed, though why his services should have been deemed of more value than those of the clerk of works is clear to nobody but the council.

Reductions of \$300 each in the salaries of Director Smith and Superintendent Martin will leave those men with fair salaries still. So too, nobody can be surprised that Director Wisely was reduced to a \$1000, or that the chief engineer of the fire department, who is not confined to that source of revenue, was reduced to a like amount. Nor can any fault be found with the request to the mayor to give the chief inspector of licenses the merely nominal sum of \$50, when he has still a salary of \$1,200 as chief of police.

Even since the union it has been a source of complaint that the city has had two city engineers when only one was needed. Chesley's motion was to amalgamate the two offices now held at \$1080 each into one at \$1,200, thus making a saving of \$960. The council was apparently afraid to deal with this matter and it was referred. Legislation is to be asked for the reduction of the salary of the police magistrate to \$2,000 and of his clerk to \$1,000, but the spasmodic reformers who proposed to cut down the salary of the mayor to \$1000 showed the depth of their sincerity for reform by leaving it untouched at \$1,600. Perhaps each of the "reformers" has a hope that he may fill the office some day, and wants to get all he can out of it. The aldermen have not asked for legislation to cut off their own allowance of \$100 a year each.

Assuming that the mayor will take the \$400 off the chief inspector's pay, the total amount saved by the reduction of salaries, will be \$1,950, or something less than five-sixths of a cent on the hundred dollars on the assessment. By the reduction on the maintenance of streets, and the omission of sanitary precautions, some \$20,000 will be saved this year, and so it is that they calculate the reduction of the rate of taxation from \$1.50 to \$1.42 on the hundred dollars.

The scheme of salary reform was brought to light and acted on between Thursday morning and Thursday afternoon. The aldermen seemed panic stricken lest they should fail to advertise themselves as economists at the tail end of the year.

Despite the fact of reductions made in this helter-skelter way, it will be hard to convince the public that the loudest advocates of reform just now are actuated by sincerity rather than clap-trap. Some of them are the wrong kind of men to inspire confidence as reformers. Their records are dead against them.

The public is pretty easily fooled, but it needs the right kind of men to fool them.

FACTS OF A BIG FAILURE.

THE RESULT OF BURPEE, THORNE & CO.'S YEAR'S BUSINESS.

Twelve Thousand Dollars Out of Sight—What Will the Estate Pay on the Dollar?—A Slaughter Sale That Will Hurt the Retail Trade.

The retail hardware and jeweller's trade has suffered this week from the slaughtered auction sale of the bankrupt stock of Burpee Thorne & Co. Every morning and afternoon the sound of the auctioneer's voice and the "going, going, gone" has been heard on Prince Wm. street and hundreds of people have been attracted by it.

The goods have sold at prices which in some cases were enormously high, in others ridiculously low; the average being probably much under the usual retail figure. But that is what people go to auctions for, they expect low prices and great bargains and they sometimes are satisfied. It is all according to the crowd. If it is large and contented and the bidding becomes animated then look out for high prices. Many men and women, but more frequently the latter, lose their heads when some one goes them one better and they are only too eager to respond by a nod to the auctioneer's look for a higher bid. The price goes up by degrees until the real value is buried beneath a heap of bids. But such a sale is an injury to business. It creates an unnatural demand and encourages people to spend their cash for goods which they buy upon impulse in many cases and could as well do without. For the articles which they do need they are forced to ask credit.

The nine day's wonderment at the failure of Burpee, Thorne, & Co., has hardly yet worn off. The firm was considered by those who gave but superficial attention to such matters one of the solid concerns of the city, and about as well able to hold its own as any in the city. The assignment notice, therefore, was a surprise for the friends, customers, and nine-tenths of the creditors of the said house. For many years the house was known as Clark, Kerr & Thorne, and as such made its way in the business world. A little more than a year ago, however, Messrs. Kerr & Clark retired from the firm, and Mr. Francis Burpee, a young man, who had not attained his majority, became a partner and introduced \$15,000 of new capital into the business. Mr. Clarke remained with the new firm, and Mr. Thorne contributed \$5,000 of new capital. This should have been sufficient to place the newly-named concern on a firm financial basis, and so it seemed for a time, but the result proved that new capital and redoubled energy could not withstand the tide of misfortune.

Mr. Burpee's friends considered the matter with him and decided that the opening was a good one. He was presented with \$5,000 by his uncle and the balance, \$10,000, came from a near relative. In addition to this E. R. Burpee placed securities in the bank to the amount of \$10,000 for the new concern to draw against if necessary. At the time of the assignment some \$3,000 or \$4,000 had been drawn on account of this collateral.

Mr. H. J. Thorne, the member of the old firm who joined his fortunes with Mr. Burpee, gave his close and undivided attention to the business. Strangely enough while for many years before, the public had demanded his services in the civic chair and asked him to be a candidate for provincial political honors, last year he was free to attend to his private affairs. He was just as popular in his business as he was in public life and business transactions with him were always pleasant.

During the year, however, the firm met a new competition, one that perhaps was not foreseen, but which proved very formidable. One of the retiring members, Mr. Kerr, associated with himself one of the best representatives of the old house, Mr. Robertson and entered the same business under the firm name of Kerr & Robertson. It was only natural to expect that such a combination should secure some of the trade given to the old house and that they did so is not doubted.

The stock taking of Burpee, Thorne & Co., the first of this year revealed the true condition of their affairs. They were \$12,000 on the wrong side and when the result was announced to Mr. Thorne he did not hesitate what was the best course to pursue. He was offered new capital to endeavor to revive the old trade if he thought it possible but he declined and the next morning the assignment was arranged with Mr. Geo. Schofield, of the Bank of New Brunswick, Mr. John P. Macintyre and Mr. C. W. Weldon as trustees.

Notices were at once served upon the unmarried employes that their services would not be required and strangely enough one of the first to receive such intimation was Mr. Burpee. He did not go however.

The local creditors are more numerous than is usually the case in a city failure. All the nail manufacturers were hit heavily, two of them for about \$4,000 each, and one of them for about \$1,500. There are two preference claims, one of \$25,000—a long

standing bill of sale—and the three or four thousand dollars drawn against the collateral placed in the bank of New Brunswick by Mr. E. R. Burpee. To pay these claims and the cost of winding up will take at least \$30,000, probably \$32,000. The total assets are reckoned at between \$60,000 and \$70,000 of which about \$14,000 are in book debts. It is estimated by so competent an authority as Mr. Schofield that the estate may pay 25 cents on the dollar.

POETS ARE STILL AT WORK.

End of the March Competition, But There are Five Weeks in April.

The competition for the five dollar prize for the present month appears to be as active as was the February contest. Verses are published this week on the fifteenth as well as the fourth page and represent a wide area of country. It may be stated that some of the poems published in Progress have not been sent with a view to entry in the contest, and would have appeared in any case. All however, are equally entitled to consideration in determining who is entitled to the award.

This is the last week for the March competition, but as there are five Saturdays in April the opportunities to struggle for the final award are numerous. It may be remarked in passing that the amateur poet is more likely to be pleased in having five Saturdays in a month than is the manufacturer or other employer who has to make weekly payments but has to rely on monthly collections. With such gross and material things as these, however, the true poet has very little to do.

Among the contributions in the present issue, very many will be glad to recognize the name of "Noel Pilgrim," whose finished style was familiar to the readers of Progress in its earlier days. The writer is now living in the United States many hundred miles away from his former home in this province, and only occasionally finds time to let his old friends hear from him through the press.

As evidence of the way in which Progress has made its way to distant places is found in the sources from which the contributions in verse have come since the competition was begun. Not only have Canada and the northern and southern states been well represented, but foreign lands have come to the front, including Great Britain and the continent. A week or so ago were lines relating to Switzerland, by a New Brunswicker abroad, while this week comes the crystallization of a thought from one who is living by the banks of the distant Rhine.

A large number of contributions still remain unpublished. Some of those have yet to appear, while others will be kept for a season in the hope that they may be improved by age.

A PRESIDENT'S SHARP MOVE.

He Reduces the Salaries and Votes Himself Something.

Smart men sometimes make mistakes, though they may not appear to be such at the time. This is well illustrated in the case of the president of a corporation but a little more than a year old, who is considered keener than the average man and who does not scruple to say just what he thinks on all occasions. Before the annual meeting he was afraid the balance sheet was not going to prove as satisfactory as it should, and he made a fuss about it even before the book-keeper had finished his work. He was no wiser however, before the directors met, and the showing which permitted a six per cent dividend was a pleasant surprise for him. In spite of it however he managed to make three motions before the meeting adjourned and to have all of them carried.

One of them was to reduce the salary of the hard working manager and father of the business from \$2400 to \$2000 a year, the other was to reduce the secretary's salary from \$1200 to \$1000, and the third was to allow the president \$600 for his services as he had a good deal to look after!

This was cutting down expenses with a vengeance. The \$600 salary voted to him on his own motion will pay him just 12 per cent on the amount he has invested in the concern, and if the usual six per cent is also declared he will put 18 per cent a year in his pocket.

Grand Chapter Exemplification.

Owing to unforeseen circumstances, it was found impossible to give an exemplification of the caputular degrees of Freemasonry under the auspices of the Grand Chapter, on the 22nd instant. It is now understood that the special convocation for that purpose will be held on Wednesday, the 5th of April. The official notice will be given in due time, so that members of the royal craft at a distance will be fully and definitely informed on the subject.

What Dame Rumor Says.

An interesting rumor is connected with the journey of a city lawyer to southern latitudes. It is said that he did not go for his health but in the interest of parties moving in society who are anxious to free a lady formerly a resident here and popular in society, from marriage bondage.

ONLY MUTTERINGS NOW.

NO MORE HEAVY THUNDER AMONG PASTOR SHORE'S CONGREGATION.

A Committee Has Been Appointed to Give Him a Good Send Off—Some Points in the Debate—No Further News of the man Who Told "Progress."

The cloud which has been hanging over the Carleton presbyterian church seems gradually passing away, with occasional mutterings of thunder to show that the electrical conditions for a storm are still present, though but to a limited extent. Pastor Shore has resigned, and his resignation has been accepted. That ends a part of the matter, and the greater part. The question is now only of detail as to how far it is proper for the congregation to weep or to rejoice over the severance of pastor and people.

This was virtually the subject of discussion at the last meeting held by the congregation, at which Mr. John Sleeth presided. The desire to have the matter closed up was very evident, and the people, to secure this end, agreed to pay Mr. Shore the amounts which were in dispute. At the same time it was to be clearly understood that they did not recognize his claims as matters of right or law. The resignation was accepted without any conditions.

There was some diversity of opinion as to the kind of a "send-off" that should be given the pastor, but the matter was settled by the appointment of three men favorable to him, who are to report with a eulogy at the next meeting of the presbytery. In the course of the discussion the chairman endeavored to point out the great benefits conferred on the church by Mr. Shore, and remarked that every person in the congregation regretted Mr. Shore's removal. He also implied that the departing minister's pastorate had been marked by temporal and spiritual prosperity to the church.

"Where could we find a man worse than one devoid of gratitude?" he asked.

Then a deacon replied that there were worse. "For instance," said he, "a man who mis-represents facts is just about as bad." Then he proceeded to point out that when Mr. Shore first came, there was no disturbance in the church, but what a change do we see at present! There is some dissension among the people themselves and many of them highly disapprove of the course the pastor has seen fit to pursue. The finances are in a worse condition than when he came among us, never before his time, had an attempt been made to mortgage the manse nor had there ever before been a note of hand floating around endorsed by the pastor to raise funds to pay the expenses of the church. So when a man says that there was only peace, and prosperity during the late pastorate he is worse than the man devoid of gratitude, affirmed the deacon.

The proceedings were varied by occasional allusions to Progress, and several worthy men were willing to make oath that they had not supplied any of the information given to the public in these columns from time to time.

An interested spectator of the proceedings was Mr. Jarvis Wilson, who remained silent until after the close of the session, when he spoke his mind with vigor to a member of the presbytery who had worried him with interruptions at the last meeting of that body.

The merry gathering then broke up.

WHY WAS THERE NO INQUEST?

Did Dooley Die Merely from Drinking, or Because of His Treatment?

There seem to have been a number of reasons why an inquest should have been held in the case of the man Dooley, who died at the hospital a few days ago. So far as the facts have transpired, the man was arrested for drunkenness at night, put into a cell, and in the morning was found to be in a terrible state with delirium tremens. When a doctor was sent for at last, he found Dooley dying and ordered his instant removal to the hospital. He was driven there in an open wagon, yelling, kicking and foaming at the mouth, and held down by two or three policemen. An hour or two after reaching the hospital he was dead.

Coroner Hetherington, who is supposed to have a monopoly of the hospital inquests, was away on a vacation, but Coroner Berryman was notified and said he would hold an inquest. He has not done so. Whether he thought it would be a breach of etiquette to deal with a corpse belonging to Coroner Hetherington, or whether Chief Clark satisfied him that the man would have died several hours sooner if he had not been arrested, does not appear. How far the arrest and treatment of the man, his being thrust into a cold and offensive cell and left there until he was found to be dying, had anything to do with the matter, is a point on which there should be some information. The man may have been properly treated or he may not have been, and the chief of police, for the credit of his department, should have insisted on a thorough investigation. As the matter stands now, there is room for a good deal of speculation as to

how far the arrest and treatment of the unfortunate Dooley hastened his death.

Will Probably Settle the Matter.

The fate of Dr. Randall and C. B. Welton will doubtless be decided before Progress reaches the public. The judgement of the supreme court on the arguments for the writ of error was to be given yesterday and at last accounts there was a good deal of doubt what it would be. It was currently reported that Judge Palmer had prepared an elaborate judgment in favor of the prisoners, and that the opinion of Judge Tuck was to the like effect. The opinions of the chief justice and Judge Fraser were not known, but there was an impression that they were not favorable to the prisoners. Judges King and Hanington did not take part in the hearing. In case the court should divide two and two, the judgement of the lower court would hold good, unless an appeal was taken to Ottawa. In English practice, in event of an equal division, the junior judge withdraws his judgment, but that has not been the practice here. In this instance the junior judge is Mr. Justice Tuck.

Should They Stand, Sit or Kneel?

At a confirmation service by the Bishop of Fredericton, recently, there seemed to be a diversity of opinion among the congregation as to whether they should stand, sit or kneel, during the time of the imposition of hands on the candidates. Most of the people preferred to sit, as they would if listening to a sermon, a few knelt as they would during a prayer, while a few more stood, as is customary during the administration of the sacrament of baptism, and as is understood to be the practice in England. The choir undertook to carry out the latter course, which was some moral support to the members of the congregation who did likewise, but after a few minutes the choir sat down, and then most of the others followed their example. In the absence of any rubrical directions in the form of service, it might be well in the future to have some understanding on the subject, by which at least uniformity might be secured.

Poor Pay for Type Writers.

A story comes to the ears of Progress which does not reflect any credit on a stenographer who is noted for his abundance of promises and the lax way which he fulfills them. In a recent court case some young ladies assisted him in transcribing, on his promise to pay each \$12 for a certain amount of work. They hired type-writers to do this and when the work was done asked for payment. They were laughed at. The trick is the more contemptible since the type writers can ill afford to lose the rent of their machines as well as their labor.

A Widow and Her Property.

There is considerable talk in the vicinity of Fredericton over the disposition of the property of a well-known gentleman, lately deceased. He left no will, but considerable property, among which were certain obligations of his relatives which he had not recorded. His widow permitted a near relative to go through his papers, and it is said that he took care of the obligations referred to. How good care he took of them remains to be seen. The facts are not all in Progress' possession as yet.

Much Work On It.

It is said that the wonderfully handsome woodwork surrounding the clock in W. Tremaine Gard's window represents the labor of nearly three months, each day being from 12 to 14 hours long for the indefatigable toiler, Mr. McDade, who has occupied his leisure time since he came from the States in this fashion. The clock and chimes are also his work and the article as it stands is placed at the low figure of \$50.

Early for Such a Record.

Progress today contains about 40 columns of advertising, apart from its own announcements; so much that a portion of it finds a place on the fourth page, which 48 issues out of the 52 in a year is devoted entirely to reading matter. The unsolicited testimonials at hand regarding the value of advertising in Progress would fill a page of it, but it does not seem at all necessary to use them.

A Question of Costs Now.

Though the lawyers of one party, at least, deny any knowledge of it, the statement that the Stevens-Nase matter is approaching a settlement seems to be fairly well understood. It is said that an offer of settlement has been made simply to let the matter drop, withdraw the suit and each party to pay his own costs. The other party is holding out for costs.

May be Called to St. Luke's.

Rev. W. O. Raymond of St. Mary's may be asked to accept the rectorship of St. Luke's church. Mr. Raymond has done much hard and faithful work in the young church of which he is now rector and if he is asked to accept the larger field of St. Luke's it may be regarded as well deserved promotion.